FROM THE GARDEN

some shadows of eternity - Henry Vaughan

i

Long since I sang my early bright days
in your garden, the fleet hours
cradled in green and the brown
arms that rocked me, I looked to the time
you would find me, friend of my sun days,
companion of holy and high days
that each day became. I listened
to what the heart of you spoke in the quiet
between laughter, and pauses in song.
How open your words as you taught me to play
the games of a time I would learn and remember.
You gave me a tree of strange fruit I could feast on
and thought I would make my way through all sorrow
enraptured, endowed with the sweetness you brought.

Then I left, and believed you would follow.

ii

Why did you stay
while I grew away from
the places we knew, suddenly alone,
heavy with knowledge and curiously full,
taking my way with no thought of you
in a world quite remorselessly free?

And the ground fell away from each step
of the journey, to new love's rebellion,
excitements of form, all the shapes
of a landscape's enticing return —
to trace in the world's eye its vision.

Where had I lost you, beyond the sad gates
closing blindly behind me, and never a word
of recall?

A woman's desire, a human fire
can waste every leaf in your garden.

iii

I have come from your burning
with only these words,
the ashes have lain
and cooled to these fragments;
I sift them for markings
to charter my exile
but there are no signs
retrieved of my living,
no signs in the hour, but these:

these words to remake
the waste land your garden,
these halting words sing
the soul's festival,
these words to relive
the love that you grew in,
these words of the holy
child in us all.